

Women's Ice hockey in Estonia

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<p>In Estonia hockey has been active just 10 years. Women's entrance to the so-called masculine sport has drawn some attention. Female participation in sports has been much lower, and in some cases eliminated. Influential topics are attitude, gender roles, social pressure, and culture.</p> <p>For data collection have used questionnaire, to see hockey experiences from the player's point of view. This research study was in Estonian women's ice hockey. The study was done to find out the level and range of ice hockey, to name possible obstacles what could interfere with potential development, to study values and expectations of sport and interest level from the female participants and to look at the current qualification and organization level of coaches and hockey clubs.</p> <p>Study shows that players are highly interested to expand hockey among women. Their motives are to develop their personal skills and gain enjoyment from physical activity. Players like the challenge that the game is offering. Overall society attitude towards this field is mainly positive, although this sport is also seen as a male sport and unnatural for women.</p> <p>Players shared experiences can help to develop and increase women's ice hockey in future. Tada contains positive and negative information. It can be good starting point for future club planning and overall development.</p>	
Key words Women, Ice Hockey, Estonia, Gender and Sport, Women and Sport	

Contents

1	Introduction	2
2	Theory	4
2.1	Women's ice hockey in Estonia.....	4
2.2	Literature and case study's.....	7
2.2.1	Sport, women and history.....	7
2.2.2	Women in sport	8
2.2.3	Sport, women and media	10
2.3	Previous researches in Estonia	11
2.3.1	Women in sport	11
2.3.2	Gender in educational literature	12
2.3.3	Women in Estonian media.....	13
2.4	Hyman development.....	14
2.5	Decision making	16
3	Empirical part	19
3.1	Objectives	19
3.2	Method.....	19
3.3	Inquiry	20
3.4	Results and data	22
3.4.1	Player's data	22
3.4.2	Motives.....	23
3.4.3	Potential obstacles	25
3.4.4	Attitude against "Women's Ice hockey"	28
3.4.5	General women's hockey situation in Estonia	32
3.4.6	Valuation of the club.....	33
3.4.7	Valuation of coaches	34
3.4.8	Co-operation interest.....	36
4	Discussion	37
4.1	Summary	37
4.2	Conclusion and recommendations.....	38

Bibliography.....40

Appendices43

.....

1 Introduction

In 90s ice hockey started to offer interest among Estonian women. Big influence was from first Olympic Games in women's ice hockey and overall development in close countries. One of the biggest role models has been Finnish and Latvian women. Among Estonian women this sport prongs excitement but number of participants has been small.

Attention earns subject women in sport. Overall women engagement with traditional team games is small. Globally women have been less represented in sport activities than men. It offers interest and closer study to understand the cap between the genders. As a pattern, there are some repeating problems occurring among sporting women all over the world.

For the yearly ages was conception that women are naturally not athletic and sport can damage their physical health. For now it's clear that sport offers many benefits in physical and psychological way. Sport can be used by healthy reasons as its main function is to keep human body properly functioning. Other output is good self esteem and self-respect. Also sport offers good mental stimulation. It's been part of the social life and entrainment for centuries.

Unfortunately sport is not always for everyone. There are some exclusions and serious discriminations by different classifications. Gender plays big role, as sport experiences can be different for women and man. There are totally different social rules or tradition for two different genders.

Ice hockey is winter sport games, what is played on ice by two opposing teams. Using curved sticks player try to drive buck into opponent's net. Two teams have 6 players on ice with skates. Game consists of three 20 minutes periods. Game winner is most scored team.

Ice-hockey is one of the fastest games. It assumes a player to have good balance, being fast and smooth, and perfect co-operation with team-mates. Ice hockey is an interesting game what offers physical and mental stimulation.

Games are played by professionals, hobby athletes and it offers interest among leisure activist. Game can played by kids, as modern equipment makes it safe and protects players from injuries.

Ice hockey started in Canada in the early 19th century. The first men's world championships where held in Montreal in 1883. As part of the Winter Olympic Games, ice hockey was played for the first time in 1924. That sport reached Europe in the beginning of the 19th century.

In 1989, the first women's European championship was played in Germany. And the first IIHF World Women's Ice Hockey Championships where held in 1990 in Ottawa Canada. At the official games already participated countries with women's hockey such as Finland, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, Sweden, United States, Canada, Japan, China, Denmark, Korea, India, Hong Kong, Czechoslovakia, Netherland, France, Great Britain. (IIHF 2009.)

Women's ice hockey was approved as an Olympic sport in 1992, and made its debut in Nagano 1998, XVIII Olympic Winter Games. For the year 2008, the number of countries where ice hockey is played by women had grown enough so that championships were held in four different divisions. Canada, Russia, China, United states, Switzerland, Germany, Finland, Sweden, Japan, Kazakhstan, Slovakia, Czech republic, France, Norway, Latvia, Austria, Denmark, North Korea, Italy, Netherlands, Austria, Great Britain, Slovenia, Croatia, Belgium, Hungary, South Korea, Iceland, New Zealand, Romania, Estonia, South Africa, and Turkey. In total, 32 countries participated in championships that year. (IIHF 2009.)

Women's and men's ice hockey differs only in rules that women have to wear protective full-face mask and there is no body checking allowed. Otherwise, games are the same. But somehow overall development of the game and availability is smaller for women.

2 Theory

2.1 Women's ice hockey in Estonia

Estonian Ice hockey federation is a member of the International Ice Hockey Federation since February 17, 1935. Overall Estonian national population is 1 307 605. Where 353 male, and 85 female players participate in hockey practices in 8 different indoor rinks. For the year 2008, men's world ranking is 27th and women's 32nd. (IIHF 2009.)

First written comments and statistics can be found in magazines or later in games protocols. In 1997 in the newspaper "Meie Meel" is a written article that girls are playing ice hockey in Tallinn Ice hockey club THK-88. Also there is statistics that first non-official game in women's hockey was held in 1992 when club THK-88 girls lost a game to a Riga, Latvia women's team 0:11. (Putnik 1997, 7.)

In 1998, in sport magazine "Sporditüht" appears article "Estonian girls are playing ice hockey". By Finnish neighbor's example, girls in Estonia were playing ringette in 1990. After some time this sport group broke down as some girls left or turned to other sports. A small group of girls moved on from ringette to ice hockey. In 1998, there was a girls group aged 13-16 regularly practicing in hockey for club THK-88. (Kalkun 1998, 44-45.)

The next year's information about women playing ice hockey is totally missing, until the year 2003, when the women's hockey club Queens in Tallinn was formed and registered. By the year 2004, the team name was changed to HC Dreamland Queens, and regularly practicing hockey approximately 20 girls aged 14-20. At the same year was held the first international hockey tournament Martell Cup 2004 in Tallinn, in which participated women's teams from Latvia, Finland, Estonia and Sweden. (HC Dreamland Queens 2008.)

Also in the year 2004 was formed a second women's hockey club, HC Jäälinnud, with approximately 20 girls.

In the **season 2004-2005** was held the first Estonian women's ice hockey championships, in which participated three teams: Dreamland Queens I, Dreamland Queens II and HC Jäälinnud.

For the **season 2005-2006** were accrued new women's hockey team called Viru Sputnik from Kohtla-Järve. Championships were held with 3 teams: HC Jäälinnud, Viru Sputnik and HC Dreamland Queens where the last one was the strongest one. (HC Dreamland Queens 2008.)

In 14-16 October 2005, Estonian ice hockey team Dreamland Queens was playing for IIHF European Championship Cup, group A against Espoo Blues (Finland), Almata Aisulu (Kazakhstan), and Laima (Latvia). The Finnish hockey club won the tournament and Dreamland Queens remained in fourth place.

2005 was held the first Estonian National team test game against Iceland National Team. The game was played in Tallinn and the results were 8-2 in favor of the Estonians. (HC Dreamland Queens 2008.)

First time Estonian women's Ice hockey National team takes part in IIHF IWT tournament 16-20.03.2006 Valmiera, Latvia. They played against Latvia, Norway and Holland's National Teams. (HC Dreamland Queens 2008.)

Season 2006-2007 Estonian championships were held continually with 3 teams. The Dreamland Queens stayed in first place, Viru Sputnik second, and Jäälinnud third.

For the first time Estonian national team participated in IIHF World Women's Championships division IV Romania 26.3-1.4 2007. For this year division 4 ranking stayed: Croatia, Romania, New Zealand, Estonia, Iceland, and Turkey. (HC Dreamland Queens 2008.)

For the following Dreamland Queens take part IIHF European championship cup in Tukums Latvia 6-8.10 2006. Where they played against Laima (Latvia), Ilves (Finland) and Valerenga (Norway). Hockey team Ilves achieves first place and Dreamland Queens remains in fourth place. (HC Dreamland Queens 2008.)

Season 2007-2008 Estonian championships remained the same. First time Dreamland queens participated in Finnish women's national league (suomi sarja). In city Tartu was organized new women's hockey club Säde, with approximately 20 players.

2008 European Women's Championship Cup group C was held in France. Dreamland Queens earned 0 points playing against HC Cergy Pontoise – France, ViF IL Oslo – Norway, Slough Phantoms – Grate Britannia.

Following year 2008 IIHF World Women's Championship DIV IV were held again in Romania. This time final ranking where changing: Iceland, New Zealand, Romania, South Africa, Estonia, Turkey. (HC Dreamland Queens 2008.)

For **2008-2009 season** two Tallinn ice hockey clubs, Dreamland Queens and Jäälinnud, united and played for Estonian championships with the name Jääku-ningannad. New ice hockey club joined with championships from Tartu HC Säde. Viru Sputnik remained as same and won the championships for the first time. (HC Dreamland Queens 2008.)

From former Dreamland Queen's club hockey team still takes part in Finnish women's championships (suomi sarja) with the name HC Queens.



Figure 1. Dreamland Queens, Estonian champion

2009 IIHF World Women's Championship division IV was called off (HC Dreamland Queens 2008)

All the hockey games are regulated by the IIHF rules. Women's championships are regulated by Estonian Ice hockey federation. All non-official tournaments are organized and held by clubs. Estonian hockey clubs organize or take part regularly with close countries like Latvia, Finland, Sweden, and England.

For the end of season 2008-2009 there still exist 3 hockey clubs. Jääkuningannad – Tallinn, HC Säde – Tartu and Viru Sputnik – Kohtla-Järve. The exact number of girls who participate in hockey practices is missing, but it stays near 90. (EJHL 2008.)

2.2 Literature and case study's

2.2.1 Sport, women and history

In history overall participation for women in sport has been different as for men. Women look like they have to prove themselves or find some special way to participate in sports. As women's hockey was first played in skirts and it took a long time to be able to play in the Olympics.

Olympic movement's main mission is to encourage and support sport movement through ethics in sport as well education of youth through sport and to dedicate its efforts to ensuring that, in sport, the spirit of fair play prevails and violence is banned. (IOC 2009.)

But somehow women in sport have different experiences than men in sport. Is „fair play” in use for both genders? As we can obviously see that participation in worlds championships and Olympic Games are in big time caps for women and men.

It's still an issue in some countries for women to be able to take part in sport activities, if it's even legal and promoted; women still have some limitations to so called traditionally known men's sports like ice hockey. It's not taken seriously or even it gets negative attention.

Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympics and influential in international sport wanted to remove women from participating in sport. He where publicly arguing that it's unnatural by law for women to participate. (Houlihan 2003, 90.)

Nowadays in many countries women play ice hockey, but size, popularity and fame are still different. As for men there are a lot of opportunities to make ice hockey as a career. Well known NHL is globally recognized and is one of the biggest in overall sports industry. There are lots of leagues made for women to participate in hockey but it never reaches to such level.

2.2.2 Women in sport

For a long time women were excluded from sport that demands attention. Numerous studies and research are done to find out or understand the problem. In the early ages, women were excluded from sport as it was thought that it's unnatural for women.

Three rationales have been given for opposing women's participation:

1 *the medical rationale*, that women are physiologically unsuited to sporting activity and may be damaged by it;

2 *the aesthetic rationale*, that women engaging in sport are an unattractive spectacle; and

3 *the social rationale*, that the qualities and behaviors associate with sport are contrary to 'real' femininity. (Houlihan 2003, 90.)

For now it's clear that it has nothing to do with women's physiology. Biologically and psychologically, sport has no harm for women; contrarily it offers a lot of benefits. Those who take part in it experience little role conflict and report positive changes including increased self-esteem, personal development, physical power and well being. (Houlihan 2003, 95.)

The problem lies more in attitudes and old traditions. To understand exclusion, we have to see farther than sport, its overall social structure and its adaption to sport. In many studies women and sport key words are masculinity, femininity,

homophobia, hegemony, gender roles, gender equity, under-representation in sport and sport organs, difference in education, gender and media influence.

Sports participation by women is lower than participation by men. And also it's different in what sport women and men are engaged. The areas that do attract women, and have shown marked increases in the last 20 years, are exercise and keep-fit activities with a strong body-shaping component. (Houlihan 2003, 92-93.)

Less preferred sports for women are traditional team sports, more popular are something with music like aerobics and overall body fitness. They take part of sports what represent femininity and contribute ideal of perfect female body.

It's not the natural choice; it's pressured by social gender expectations. As kids are not born as men and women they are raised into men and women. Parents carry their beliefs and even sex roles to their kids. So it's like a close circle that helps to reproduce ancient sex roles over and over again.

Many preadolescent girls engage in some physically challenging play such as jumping rope, roller skating, bike racing, various bouncing ball games, hop scotch and countless other games. Our society does not take these girls games seriously as sport, however, and by the time we reach ten or eleven we have put them away as children things. (Morgan & Meier 1995, 263.)

Already in early childhood boys are encouraged to be more active in physical way than girls. Boys are discovering world in early ages when girls are treated more protectively and therefore they don't develop so fast and not so independent. Girls activities do not include wild, dirty or loud games, from their behavior is anticipated more „girlish” ways. By the time they have reached a school age, many children have learned that physically active play is appropriate for boys, but less so for girls. They start to recognize that sport and masculinity are close, which also places it in opposition to supposedly “feminine” behavior. (Houlihan 2003, 94.)

Athletic activities are almost missing when girls reach adult age. They start to be more engaged in family and household activities as that what demands their sex-role. Next step for femininity is motherhood, its main goal in life in many cultures. Also in many European cultures it's traditionally women's area. So for the adult age women reach other issue to be away from sport.

Women's sports participation also stops earlier than men's, and is much more vulnerable to the impact of family and household responsibilities than men's. There is a particularly strong impact for women's sports participation, when their households have kids, while men's participation is much less affected. (Houliham 2003, 92.)

2.2.3 Sport, women and media

Another big topic in women's sport is media. As media has the ability to reflect reality in different angles. There has been and still is the problem that women's sport does not get equal coverage time as men's sport. And if they get time it's not in professional area but modified into old problems as femininity, sexuality, attractiveness, personal relationships or show women bodies in decorative purpose.



Figure 6. Illustrative picture from Estonian Ice Hockey Federation home page, women's section

Television both shapes and reflects the attitude of our society. National networks and local stations broadcast thousands of hours of sport coverage each year to millions of viewers. The way, that media shows female athletes or fails to cover women in sport tells us something about status of women in our society. (Birell & Cole 1994, 249.)

There is a question does media reflects reality or reality is reflected by media. But if media shows female athletes as less important than man or excludes them at all it makes both men and women think that sport is not women's "territory" and it's natural only for man.

2.3 Previous researches in Estonia

2.3.1 Women in sport

Combined study are made by The Foundation of the Estonian Sport information to study adults sport behaviors and its development outlooks. Examined aged stayed in 15-74, it was completed in 2004 but collected data is from 1998 and 2003 years. (Arvisto, Undusk, Paju, Truu, Noormets 2004, 1-5.)

Similar to worldwide researches Estonian sports habits shows that man and women participate in different fields with different number of participates. Overall hobby activities are similar for Estonian man and women. For the women first 3 sports in summer where aerobics/gymnastic 30, 1%, bicycling 37, 5%, walking 13, 4% and for the man bicycling 18, 6%, hunting/fishing 19, 9% and bodybuilding 18, 6%. Mans involvement such a feminine sport as aerobics where 4, 6%. (Arvisto et al. 2004, 16-20.)

For winter sports women and men sport habits are similar, women still like aerobics 42%, walk 23,4% and ski 14,2%. For men, aerobic 4,5% changes for bodybuilding 22,1%, but they also like walking 10,8% and skiing 18,8%. (Arvisto et al. 2004, 16-20.)

If look team sports separately than man are active in winter playing soccer 5.7%, basketball 5, 3% and volleyball 1%, 4%. But women in such team sport as basketball 1, 8%, volleyball 0, 8% and participation in soccer is missing. (Arvisto et al. 2004, 16-20.)

Similarly for international study's women's involvement in team sports are lower than mans one. Also it's clear that year 2003 people who didn't do any sports un-

equal by genders. Men who were absent are 30, 4% and women 36%. (Arvisto et al. 2004, 9.)

Study shows main obstacles why people are not engaged in sport. Big difference occurs in gender issue. As only 12, 5% of men see that family obligations are disturbing their sport activities and 29, 3% of women are disturbed by family obligations. Main reason for that are gender roles, as household in Estonia is mainly women's territory. Also difference is shown when women think that they don't have enough sports skills by 13% when men think the same about themselves in 8, 3%. (Arvisto 2004, 38-39.)

2.3.2 Gender in educational literature

In present day of democratic Estonia study materials what are used in schools are really big parts of reform kids' values of judgment, understandings, and attitudes towards life in adulthood. Attitudes will form even from language learning textbooks. By used materials is possible to shape understandings to different subjects even shape sex roles, or reproduce or even fracture understandings about traditional stereotypes. (Pöldme 2002, 225.)

In Estonian school textbooks, women are shown more as inferior and as housewives, and their success is seen inside of family. Men are shown as leaders and more involved with masculine activities, their success is outside of family boundaries. Girls' games are mostly playing housewives and taking care of baby dolls, while boys are building huts and "making" business. (Kukner 2002, 120-121.)

Both genders obtain aboriginal virtues. By books it looks like Estonia hasn't developed at all. Or we deal with misrepresentation in social reality, problem muteness and promotion of traditional gender roles reproduce. Textbooks are comparative with USA 1980 published books. Where reality is deformed and can't really help reform gender roles, or identify to equity. (Kalmus 2002, 143-145.)

In early childhood storybooks are imaged women and men traditions in old stereotypes. Men appeared more frequently and mostly in leader positions, when women are still given housewife or mother role. (Linnas 2002, 179.)

The best story and almost the only one in Estonian educational system that shows women as leaders, physically active and adventurous is „Pippi Longstocking”. Really positive kid’s book that offers positive role model for girls, it’s different as main character is female, and she is crossing lines for traditional female roles and shocks her friends by acting as a boy. To describe her main character, we can use words as masculinity, activity, decision making, independent – like modern world needs for main functions. ‘Pippi’ is starting actions; her ideas are ones that girls and boys could follow. Therefore, reading „Pippi Longstocking” does not exclude or favor any specific gender. (Trull 2002, 200-201.)

By educational system consequence we grow kids into men and women; it’s not just social accident or aboriginal virtue. It would be really easy to think that if female gender is passive, they decide to be it. But for everything is a start, so are behaviors is just natural evaluation where humans is injected with expectations, knowledge, behaviors stands what summarizes their thoughts.

2.3.3 Women in Estonian media

In research done by Tartu University journalistic and communication department “Screening gender” shows that picture in telecommunication channels is still highly stereotypical, what shows women as beauty objects or home centered beings rather than seriously considered in leading positions or as publicly respected professionals. (Pilvre 2004, 66.)

In cultural heritage, are one commonly accepted understanding, that media modifies/reduces numerous gender concept, what forms so said common sense about how are women/men, femininity and masculinity normative presented in society. How man and women are shown in media and journalism is still old fashioned and not realistic for nowadays. Even women increasing involvement in public sectors and wage labor did not change women’s media image, they still are shown as decorative being. (Pilvre 2004, 53-59.)

Women considerable lack from TV screens is tightly connected our understatement about social success and social status. In common rule is figured that women have lower social status and smaller success. Therefore women and their views

are considered less irrelevant. It helps to explain why women are less represented than men. (Pilvre 2004, 12.)

Women in sport are imaged as hobby athletes who practicing sport mostly for health reasons and also good looking rather than professional athletes and result orientated. Most minor representing by women percentage is in channel ETV (Estonian Television-national channel) sport programs, year 2002 13% and 2003 15% compared to YLE 16% in Finland. Overall in Estonia is only one familiar women sport sportscaster, Anu Säärts ETV. (Pilvre 2004, 62.)

In case when a woman represents traditional “mans field”, emphasis is always on extraordinary, deflection from norms, what demands in certain position a man. Exclusiveness by activity in “mans field” can be the only reason, why write about these women. (Pilvre 2004, 56.)

Although by the years stereotypical gender roles are changed, today’s media does not reflect realistic picture. Preferably they emphasize antiquated conceptions. Through media is re-proceeded social gender system, where is presented discursively being a woman and man normative. If male gender is evaluated by his work, social success and status then women can be athlete, politic or important public figure, media still presents her as a woman and a mother. Her assignments are not excluded from gender. So most sport related activities are not shown as sport in media, more like cultural or lifestyle event.

2.4 Hyman development

When kids grow they are influenced by many factors. First years are really important parents. They will introduce life and their own views. Educational system has big part. Kids will spend in school 9 mandatory years and extra 3 years. It’s a long time to influence kids beliefs and life values. Later life friend will play big part of personal development. See figure 2.

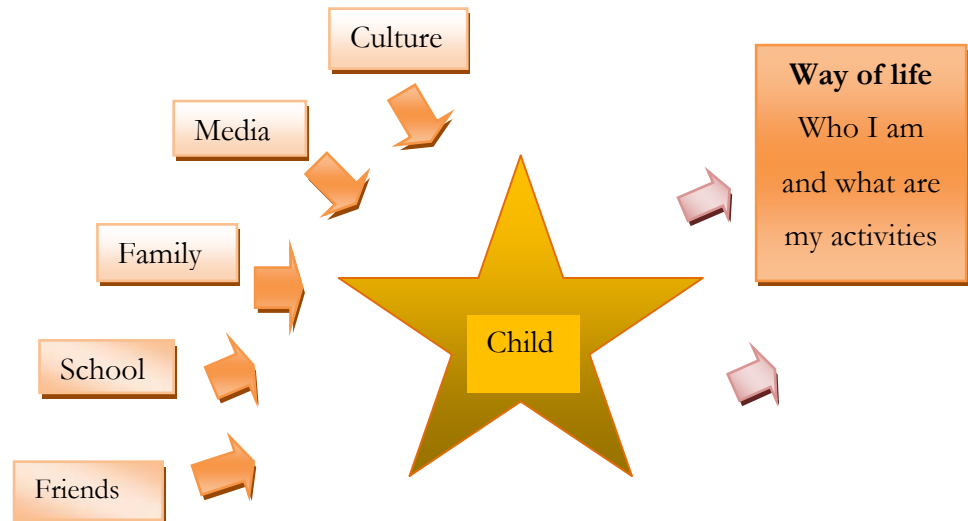


Figure 2. Personality socialization, surrounding influence

Surrounding environment includes media and mass communication systems. Kids spend lots of time front of television what presents them life. It gives possibility to see further than own city or country.

If kid stepping to a life he will live through socialization. Its personality formation process when social norms, values, attitudes and behaving manners are acquired. It's not only growth process when kid will turn to adult. Through this process will develop person's habits, abilities and knowledge. (Aimre 2006, 137-140.)

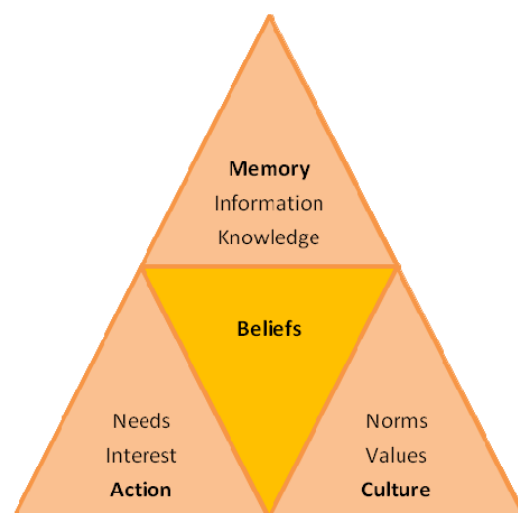


Figure 3. Personality social structure (Aimre 2006, 140)

Social elements are what person adapts through activities and life: beliefs, needs, interest. Culture teaches norms and values. Memory stored previously experienced

information and knowledge. Person behaves unconsciously through already existing beliefs. (Aimre, 2006, 137-140.)

Through socialization person learns gender roles - norms and behavior manners how she/he should act according to gender. Norms are dictated by parents, cultural beliefs, and even through school systems and media.

2.5 Decision making

Through life people have to make choices. One of them is activity choices, in what sport to be engaged. In decision making will appear three questions: can I do this task? (expectancy), do I want to do this task and why?(value), and what do I have to do to succeed in this task? (cost-benefit analysis). (Choi 2000, 89.)

Does the individual want to do the task? Even if people are certain they can do a task, they may not want to engage in it. For doing task are different reasons for participations. (Damon 1998, 1028.)

Decision making are affected by memories, culturally based stereotypes, and identity-related constructs. It's not rational behavior but unconscious process through individual theoretical system. (Damon 1029.)

See figure 4. how choices can be influenced.

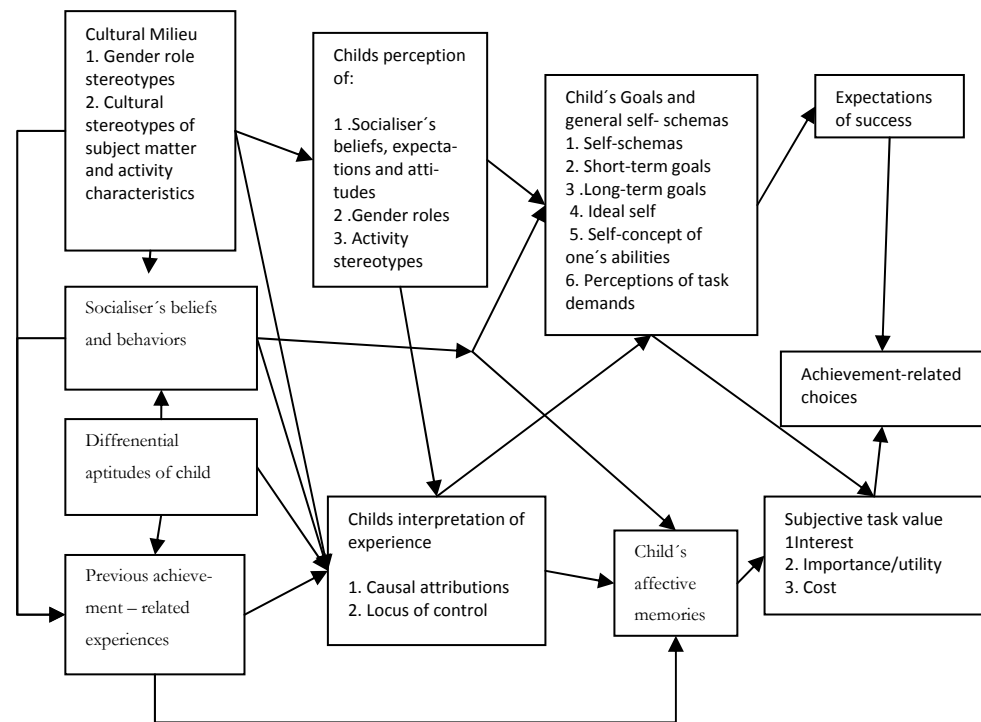


Figure 4. General model of achievement choices (Eccles et al 1998)

Expectancies and values are assumed to directly influence performance, persistence and task choice. Expectancies and values are assumed to be influenced by task-specific beliefs such as perceptions of competence, perceptions of the difficulty of different tasks, and individual goals and self-schemas. These social cognitive are influenced by individual perceptions of other people attitudes and expectations for them, and by their own interpretations of their previous achievement outcomes. Individuals task perception and interpretations of their past outcomes are assumed to be influenced by socializer's behaviors and beliefs and beliefs and by the cultural milieu and unique historical event. (Damon 1998, 1025.)

If culture teaches us old gender stereotypes that women should be famine, engaged with household, be center of family then girls will not be engaged with sport. As sport demands: masculinity, independence, aggressiveness and being active outside of family.

Even if girl feels that she has qualities to be engaged with sport, attitudes will be obstacles. She will behave outside of her gender norms. Natural choice is to behave by others expectations to fit in.



Figure 5. Making decision to play ice hockey influences

Environment are deciding gender roles – how are women seen, in what activities they are expected to be engaged. If women are seen as weaker gender: mothers, decorative beings, housemaids, reserved, physically not capable, and then environment doesn't courage women to play ice hockey.

If gender roles are neutral and not so feminine than women are seen strong, independent and active. Then society is supporting women to participate in ice hockey. And decision making for ice hockey favor is much easier.

Future involvement is decided by organizational level. Do coaches help to improve their skills? Can they have enjoyment from playing hockey or does it offering needed excitement? Are players expectations filled?

What level hockey is club offering? Are trainings accessible and suitable? If club satisfies player's physical and mental needs then person remains in hockey and enjoys the game. Club can increase hockey popularity and number of participants if they have qualities to maintain players. Its mutual benefit circle what raises women's ice hockey.

3 Empirical part

3.1 Objectives

To get some picture about experiences and current situation in hockey, are players interviewed. This study aim is to summaries current situation in Estonian women's ice hockey.

This study explores:

- Who are current players?
- What are player's motives?
- What can be main obstacles?
- Environmental issue is it encouraging or inhibit?
- Social influent, is it positive or negative?
- Future interest is there any stimulus for development?
- Current club situation, what hockey level they offer and how is it organized?
- Coaches' efficiency and quality.

Ice hockey is studied from player's point of view, to understand bearing area among women and future improvement possibility's.

3.2 Method

To collecting data was used questionnaire, made for this study by assumptions from previous literatures. Lists were given to female hockey players in Estonia, who played ice hockey in three different hockey clubs. Two clubs located in Tallinn, Estonian capital city and third one in Tartu, Estonian next biggest city.

Hockey players, who participated in trainings in Tallinn, were informed about the study personally before hockey training session. List where handed out in dressing-room, and the purpose of the study were explained in same place. Participated players had change to take questionnaires with them. They had time to fill them from 6 to 19 May 2009.

Players who participate in city Tartu hockey trainings were contacted by team manager. Questionnaires were sent by e-mail to Tartu players, with explanation about current study. They had time to familiarize and fill the questionnaires during 2 weeks.

Handed out questionnaires were collected personally again before hockey practice in dressing-room and 8 of them through e-mail.

All the collected data was processed in office program Microsoft Excel. According to question character and its answer valuation, were calculated arithmetical average and brought out maximum or minimum. Data are shown by majority percentages.

For the open ended questions or free opinions, frequently appeared words or meanings were listed. And calculate average from them. Some of the suggestions were quoted in results as at that way they retain their meaning and character.

3.3 Inquiry

Questionnaire was composed from previous study assumptions. Women in sport subject appear many problems. In this study has been learned about attitude, believes and obstacles, player's motives and reasons for participations. Overall situation in women's hockey such as: club and coaches levels and future supporting surface. Therefore questionnaire were divided into 8 different subjects.

Player's data – date, club, age, and education. Length of experience, current involvement and reason of disclaim.

Motives – do find out why they playing ice hockey, what they like about this sport and what motivate them. Player goal in ice hockey and the reason why they didn't start to play ice hockey in childhood, if it's true.

Potential obstacles – to find out possible negative affects what can eliminate women from hockey. List includes typical problems what appeared in previous studies.

Attitudes against “women’s ice hockey”. - Society reaction towards women who play ice hockey. Attitudes from player surrounding people: family, coaches, overall people and media. General judgment if hockey a man’s sport, traditional or natural. Do players get positive or negative feedback? Family/friends support towards players involvement with hockey. Have they felt discriminated because they are women and play ice hockey?

General women’s ice hockey situation in Estonia – overall, women’s hockey organization level in Estonia. Involvement of Estonian Ice Hockey Federation in women’s hockey, feel of presents and support. Ambitions for have more female involvement in ice hockey. Feel of equality by comparing mans and women’s hockey.

Club valuation – investigate organizational level of trainings and knowledge. Desire for improvement club level and suggestions how it can be done.

Coaches’ valuation – investigate level of coaches and players preferences by leader gender.

Co-operation interest – domestic and international level to unite training camps or make corporate tournaments.

For questions in list was possible to answer mainly in three ways - no, yes or hard to say. For the section “possible obstacles” questions where valuated as not a problem, sometimes and real problem. To get better picture how serious is the current problem.

“Attitude towards women’s hockey” section is some answer possibilities attributed as positive, neutral and negative.

Example of total questionnaire can be find in appendix.

3.4 Results and data

3.4.1 Player's data

All total were 19 female hockey players questioned. Average age of them is 26; from where 16 are the youngest one and 37 is the oldest one. The 16 years old was the only one who is under aged. Although two players was just turned 18 years old. They are players of 3 different clubs. 3 of them HC Jäälinnud and 11 Dreamland Queens what are located in Tallinn. 3 players are participating in HC Säde trainings what is located in Tartu.

Questioned players average hockey experience reaches for 4.2 years. Less experienced player was active for 1 year and longer experience are 14 years. 16 of them are still active and currently participate in hockey practices. 3 of them are non-active and they give explanations for not participating.

One of them was recently pregnant and gives birth to a child. Future plans are to continue participating when it's right time. Second player finds that there is no point to play in Estonia, as it's not professional at all.

Third player brings out list of reasons:

1 tired of inside team conflicts. 2 practices started to be as hard obligation, fun where missing. 3 Coaches where ignorant. 4 didn't want be involved so profoundly, my interest where just fun and play for enjoyment. 5 All former effected my duration of playing time and I stopped as I didn't want to sit on the bench.

Table 1.Players data

Club	3 Jäälinnud	11 Dreamland Queens	3 Säde
Education	7 secondary education		12 higher education
Current situation	16 active		3 non-active
	Range		Average
Players age	16-37 years		26 years
Duration	1-14 years		4,2 years

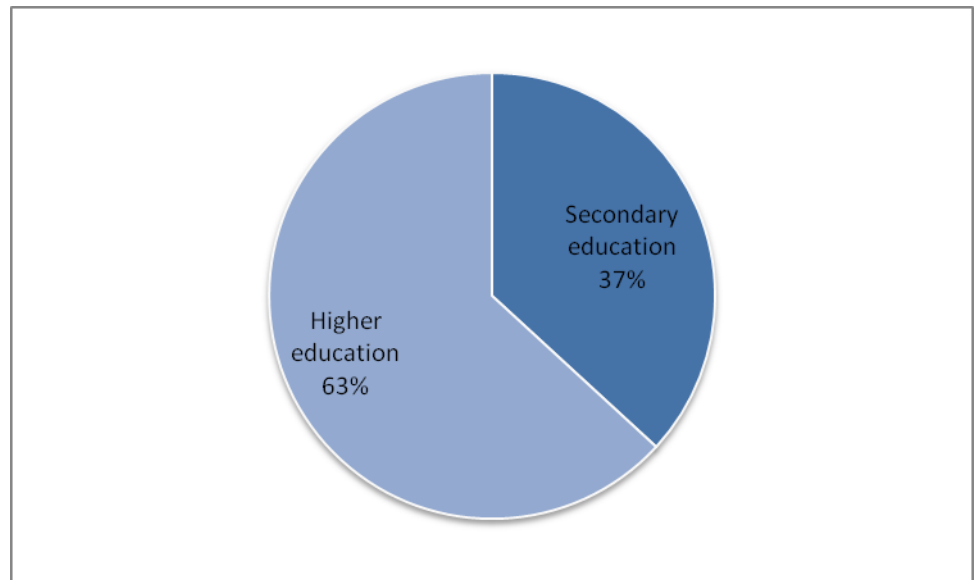


Figure 7. Player's educational level

Questioner answers show that 63% of players have higher education. And 37% of players have secondary education from were 1 player is under aged and two of them are just finishing their high school studies.

3.4.2 Motives

For the given reasons of participating in hockey practice 100% of the players answered *"I like this sport"* and *"I enjoy developing my personal skills"*. 90% of the answered players find that *„they enjoy challenge"* and 89% *"enjoy exercising"*. Only 37% of them prongs out reason that they like *"their teammates"*. Less important is the friendship issue as only 10% of answered players play hockey *"because their friend are playing"*.

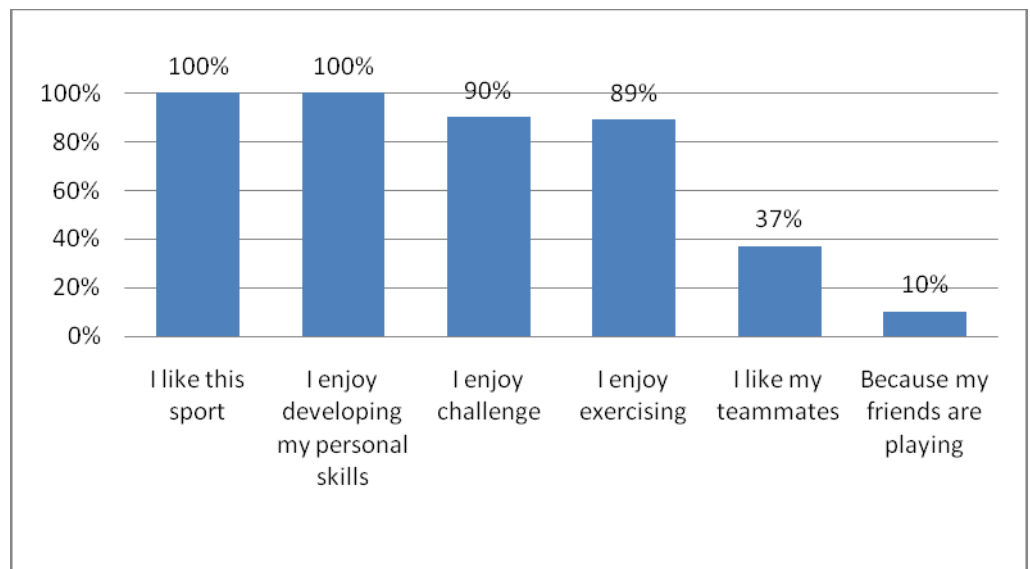


Figure 8. Player's motives - shows reasons of playing hockey in "yes" answered percentage value

Results show clearly that reasons can be characterized as personal development and interest. As yes answers to a questions I play ice hockey because "I like my teammates" and because "my friends are playing" is clearly not so important.

In the end of given reasons was added line to include their own reasons for participation. 2 of the players used it to mention enjoyment of the practicing and enjoyment of the games. Also one of them thinks that *"not so many women are playing, what makes process even more interesting"*.

Also players were asked to describe their goals in ice Hockey. Most mentioned was improvement in individual skills, total 6 times. 3 players goal is to play in foreign country. 3 times were mentioned enjoyment, play for fun and simply enjoy the activity.

Playing Estonian hockey championship shows up more than one time, were 3 times players goal is to win championship and 2 times just to play championships. Two of the players are interested of scoring goals. Only 2 players are interested of overall team success where their goals are to improve teamwork and overall team skills.

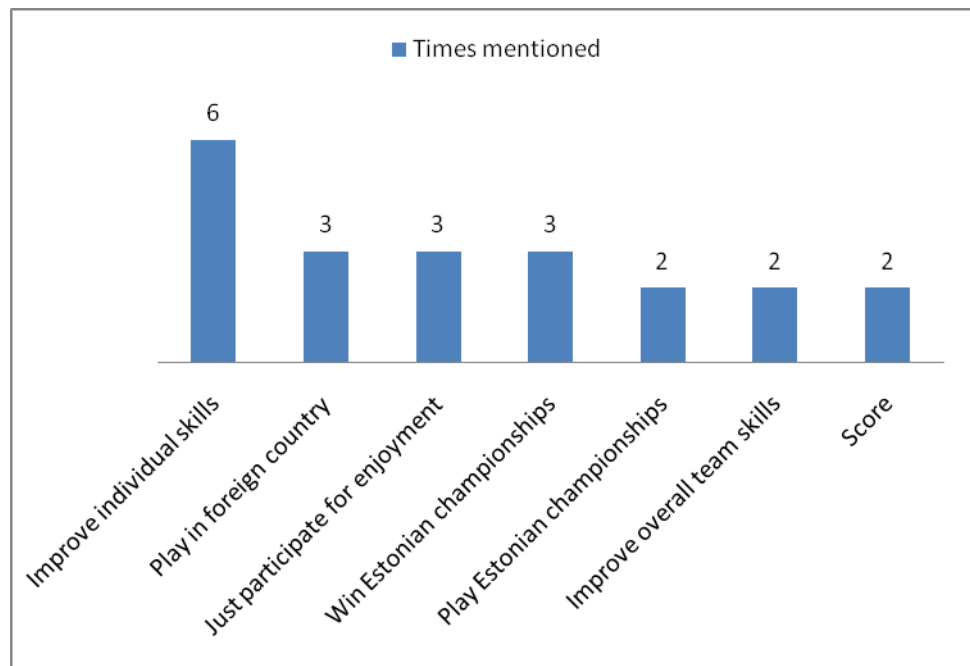


Figure 9. Added “other reasons” by players

In motivation section players were asked to explain reason why they didn’t start to play hockey in childhood. Totally 9 times was mentioned lack of ice rinks. 4 times where mentioned lack of women’s hockey existence. One of the players explained *“no such thing as women’s hockey at the soviet union times - social inequality*. “Three of the player’s showed parents influents, as they had other free time activities such as music or ballet. One of the players hated ice hockey in childhood and classified as disgusting. Two players actually started to play in childhood with boys, influence came from brothers.

3.4.3 Potential obstacles

Former researches show that women are less active in sport, where different reasons occurred as obstacles. Current questioner shows that ice hockey players have same problems.

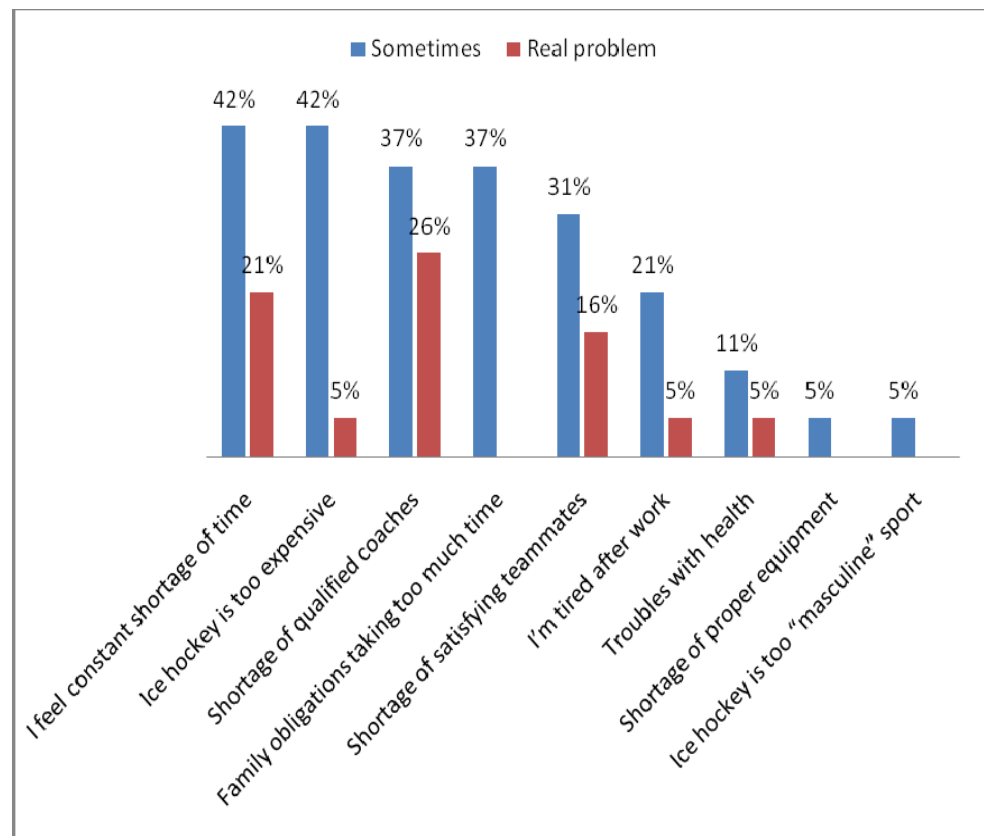


Figure 10. Potential obstacles, rated as “real problem” and “sometimes a problem”

Main obstacle occurs in “shortage of qualified coaches” as 26% of players valued it as real problem and 37% of them as “sometimes a problem”. Next problem is related with time. 21% of players marked „I feel constant shortage of time” as real problem and 42% of them as “sometimes a problem”.

Occurs that 37% thinks that sometimes “family obligations” disturb their practices or taking away their free time. It is categorized as “sometimes a problem”; none of the players considers it as a real problem.

16% sees as a real problem “shortage of satisfying teammates” and 31% of them are rated same issue as “sometimes a problem”.

From the expenses for the sport, players see that sometimes 42% ice hockey is too expensive and only 5% sees it as “real problem”.

21% of the players are tired after work and valued it as “sometimes a problem”. 5% sees tiredness as a “real problem”. Health problems don’t occur as often, 11% mention health as “sometimes a problem” and 5% as a “real problem”.

Shortage of proper equipment doesn’t occur do be “real problem” only 5% thinks its problem “sometimes”. Hockey as too “masculine” sport don’t seem to be “real problem”, its rated as “sometimes a problem” by 5% of the players, and gets less attention.

Question about fear of negative social pressure don’t occur as a problem at all.

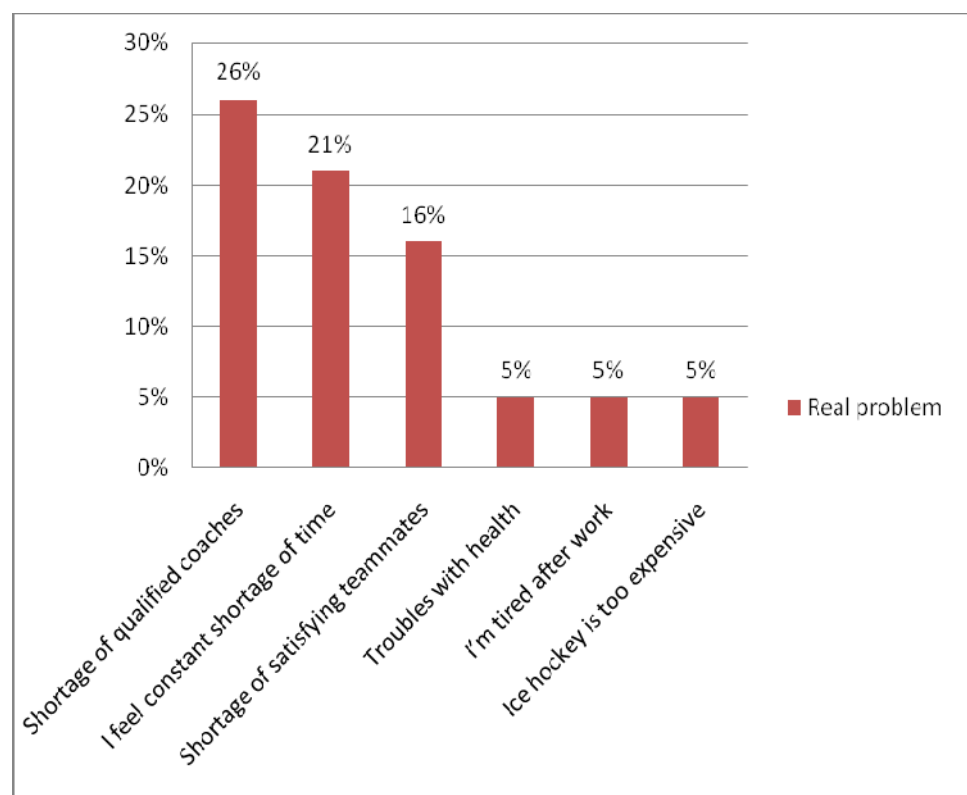


Figure 11. Potential obstacles rated as “real problem”

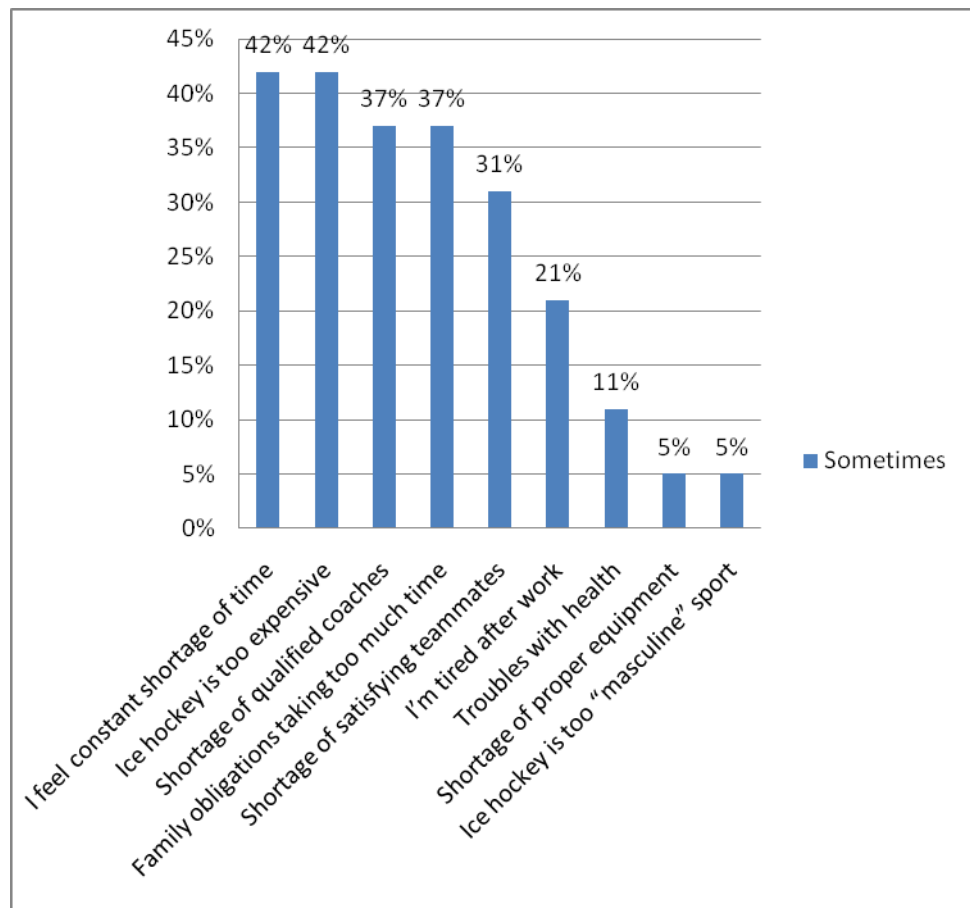


Figure 12. Potential obstacles rated as “sometimes a problem”

3.4.4 Attitude against “Women’s Ice hockey”

To find out overall attitude towards women’s hockey first five questions are asked to mark as negative, positive and neutral. Results shows attitude against female hockey by close relatives, friends, club coaches and overall society.

Examined player’s closer surrounding people as family and life companion shows different attitude results. 74% feels positive attitude from family/life companion, and equally 16% neutral or even negative feelings.

Valuation for coaches’ attitude is 37% positive, 58% neutral and 5% negative. Surrounding people as friends and colleagues shows 74% positive attitude, 16% neutral and 10% negative.

Overall society reaction is 26% positive, 9% neutral and 5% feels negative attitude. Media, TV, press and journalism divide as 37% positive, 58% neutral and 5% negative attitude. Media and club coaches' attitude is rated as exactly the same.

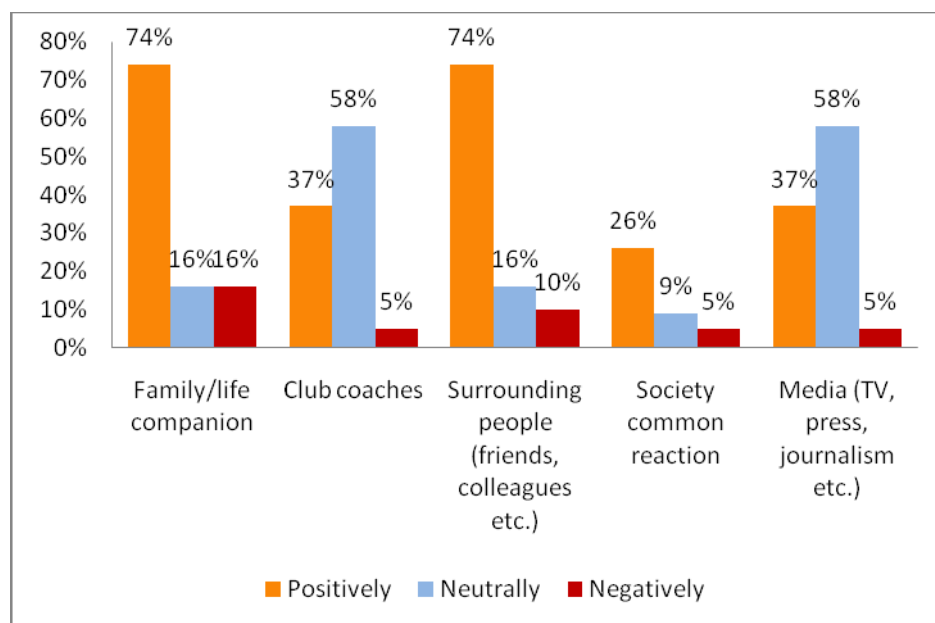


Figure 13. Attitude against “women’s hockey”

Hockey players feels their family and friends support when they comes to watch their games. 79% of players see their close ones in tribunes.

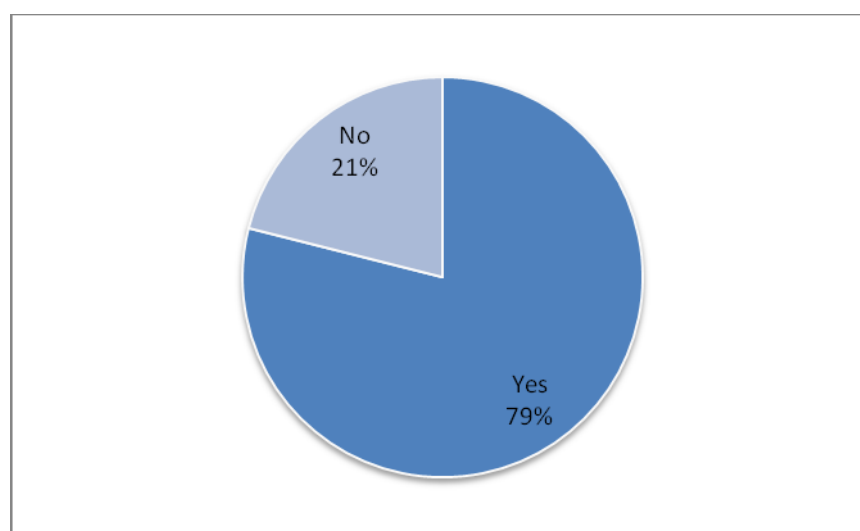


Figure 14. Player’s friends/family visitation at their hockey games

Reasons for visiting games were different: *“They want to see what women’s hockey represents”*. Were one of the players answer in section is your friends / family visits your games? Why and why not?

Also *“it’s not so common sport”* were given as positive reason. List of different reasons: it’s interesting, long tradition of supporting by visiting games, for entertainment, or *„husband plays hockey, loves it and supports in every possible way.”*

Reasons why close ones don’t show up for the games were: family doesn’t approve it, they dislike hockey, no interest for this sport and games are too far, in other city“.

To find out and get a bigger picture about ice hockey are so called man’s sport, traditional or natural, players were given simple questions to answer no, sometimes or yes. Findings are also shown in Figure 15.

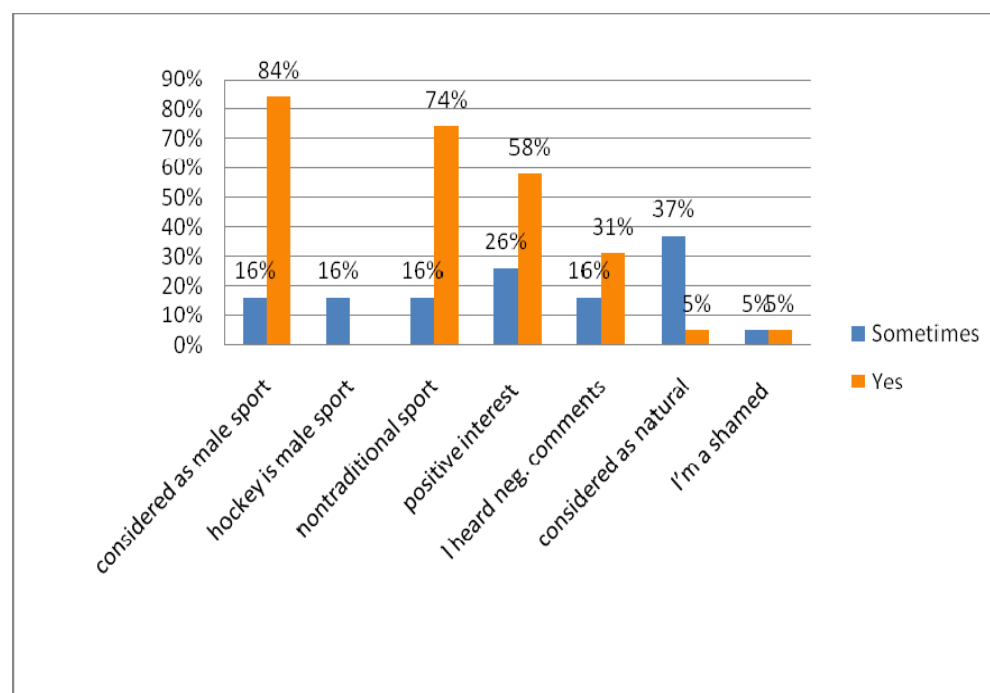


Figure 15. Statements what shows attitudes against women’s hockey

Big minority feels totally 84% that ice hockey is considered as male sport. And their own opinion is that it’s not a male sport, answered also by 84%. Not so many players are shamed or feel discomfort because of that. 5% only feels shame or are ashamed sometimes.

Players feel that hockey is considered as nontraditional sport. And 58% have felt that people think it's not natural at all. Only 37% have felt that hockey is considered as natural.

More than half of the questioned players haven't heard any negative comments about their involvement with ice hockey. 31% heard negative comments and 16% of the players hear negative comments sometimes.

For the end question: "Have you ever felt yourself harassed/ discriminated because you are a woman and you play ice hockey?" Answered as "no" was by 75% of players.

And 25% felt discriminated and give a following explanations:

"Yes, from the times when women didn't play hockey in Estonia. Usually in the public transportation when people pointed at me and said: Jesus! Women are playing hockey."

"Not directly. But if you look at the reflection of media or other like that. No one really cares about hockey."

I think it already federation issue."

"Maybe only 1-2% range."

"If only by our own club male coaches, in minimum way. Other wise not at all."

"Things are like that, no one will say it on your face, that attitude is negative. I experienced it myself, at first everybody praise that you are capable and well done and things like that. But behind of your back they talk with friends that I'm some kind of freak. Parents where only one who said straight that they disprove it .Husband where totally opposing, he think that it's cool that I'm playing hockey and he started to play too, because it's cool sport. Some people have said really badly, but I don't feel insulted, it's just their opinion."

3.4.5 General women's hockey situation in Estonia

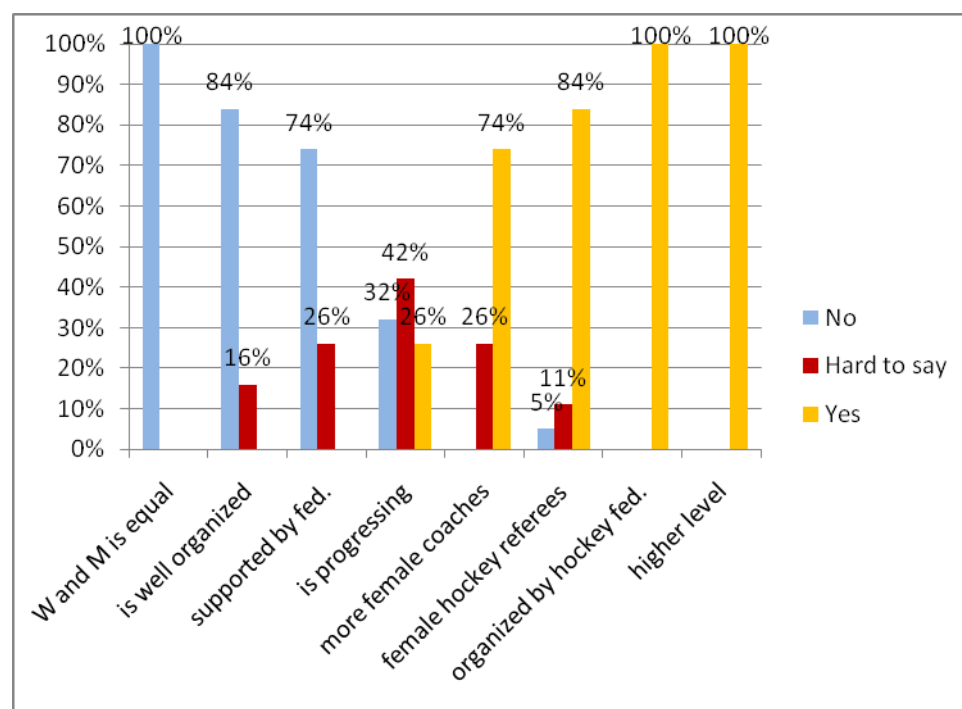


Figure 16. General hockey situation in Estonia

Women's hockey as organized sport is valued as none organized by 84% and 16% find that it's hard to say.

Question is women's hockey progressing shows similar data. That 32% of current players say firm "no" to that question. 42% of players think it's hard to say. And only 26% shows positive attitude as they think that women's hockey is progressing in Estonia.

Critical is that none of the players felt support by Ice Hockey Federation, 26% finds that it's hard to say and 75% gives their strong "no". But for the future they would like to see more support by Estonian Ice Hockey Federation, which is decided by 100% of answered players.

From the discrimination and gender issues, current players 100% sees that women's and men's hockey is not equally appreciated.

84% of players would like to see more female referees and 74% would like to see more female coaches. Some of the answered players 11% find it “hard to say” if they want to see female referees and 26% find it “hard to say” for coaches. As equal unit, 100% of players would like that hockey level in Estonia would be higher.

3.4.6 Valuation of the club

Level of the club shows in player’s opinion that 68% thinks that currently is hockey offered as a hobby. Only 5% thinks that it’s professional sport. Satisfaction with training opportunities looks negative as 47% don’t think that current trainings are perfect.

69% players find “hard to say” is their clubs organized or not. Just 5% sees that it is, but 26% says “no”. Overall knowledge about hockey is valued lowly as perfection is seen only by 16% of players and 26% don’t agree with the statement.

But for future 58% players would like that their clubs might be more professional.



Figure 17. Valuation of the club

In the suggestions section to improve club, players suggested: more and better practice times, camps, video analyze, personal training plan, educated coaches, development actions and junior players.

3.4.7 Valuation of coaches

Coaches have really big part of player's personal development. Coach's skills were divided in 5 different skills categorize: Hockey skills, teaching skills, leadership skills, knowledge of physiology and communicational skills.

All of the skills stayed in average value between 2,6 - 3,7. Most highly were valued their hockey skills 3,7 points what is really close to "really good". Teaching skills gets a bit less credits 3,4 points what makes it "average". Precisely 3 points gets leadership skills.

Lower than average are valued "knowledge of physiology" and "communication skills". Where average shows 2,8 earned points for knowledge of physiology, what makes it "bad".

And the less earned points is communication skills where average remains in 2.6 points.

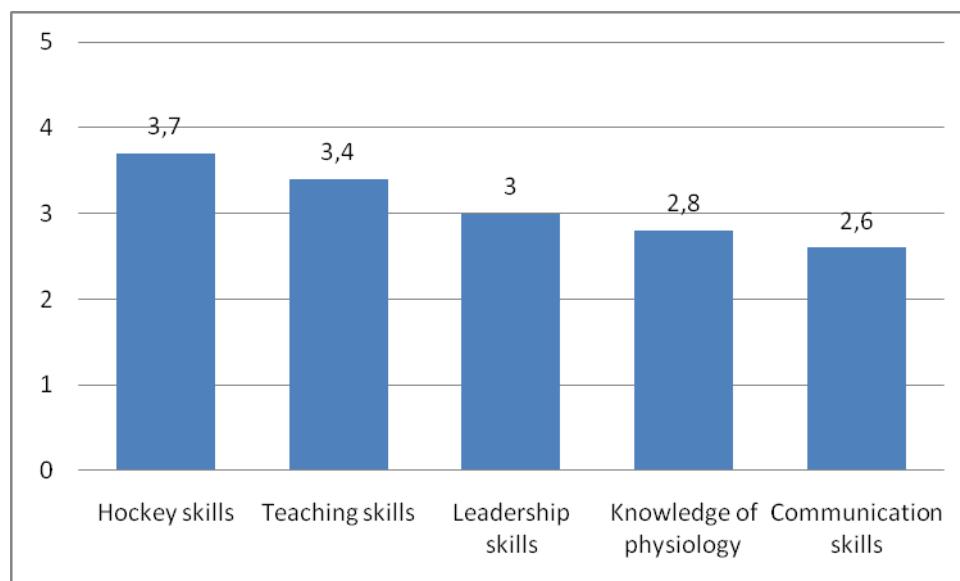


Figure 18. Valuation of club coaches, 1= missing, 2=bad, 3= average, 4=good, 5= really good

From the players point of view they don't make big difference in gender of the coach. More likely they are interested of qualified coach. In open ended question shows clearly, that 6 of the players, would like to have more professional coach. In list of open ended question, players preferring female coach:

"Male coaches don't understand that women players should be treated as male players, there no need to be extra tender with them, it doesn't take anywhere."

"Women coach, she would understand how seriously we take hockey and she would probably know a bit more about women's hockey in the world."

"Female coach would be more neutral with female players. Male coaches have always their "favorite" players, who also get more playing time."

"Female coach! But it's not the point that female or male. It's too sexist point of view. Coach should be competent to coach women. If he is not competent and he can't even communicate with women it's a personal problem, not involved with coach gender."

Players who can't say their preference don't have it or they don't have previous experience with female coach. There is one interesting assumption: *"Can't say, I haven't played for the female coach before. But male coach is puritanical and with bigger speech. Probably female coach could understand better other women with their insane souls."*

Also players who prefer male coach don't always have previous experience with female one before. One player showed following example: *"I prefer male coach, because they are concrete and maybe with more knowledge and more skilled."*

Two of the players didn't answer the question at all.

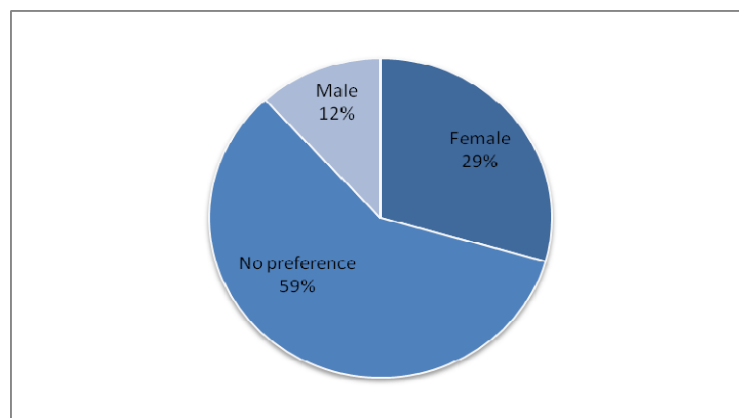


Figure 19. Player's preference in coach gender

3.4.8 Co-operation interest

Players show big interest for international co operation. 58% of players are “very much” interested of international training camps and tournaments. Co operation with other clubs is “very much” interested by 64% of players and just interested by 32%.

Also 47% players would like to know more about women’s hockey in the world total valued of “very mush” answers is 32%.

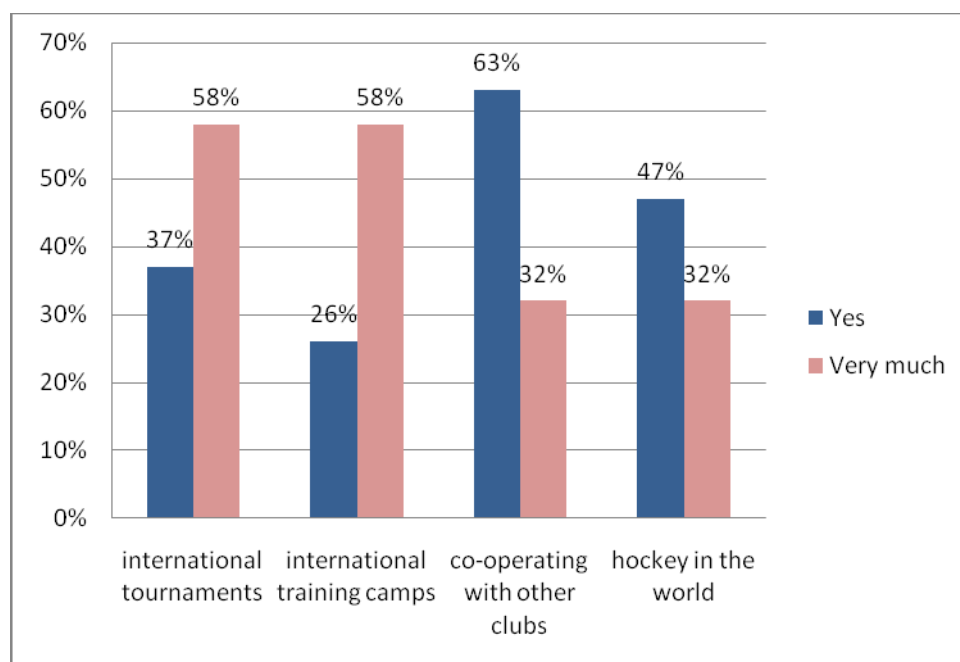


Figure 20. Co-operation interest

4 Discussion

4.1 Summary

In current study was investigated women's ice hockey in Estonia by players stand point. Do find female players motives, possible obstacles, valuations and expectations towards ice hockey.

Players are engaged with ice hockey because they like this sport. Their main interest is to developed their individual skills, enjoy exercising and challenge. Less important are socializing and team cohesion.

For real problems players see shortage of qualified coaches. Luck of time and responsibilities with family obligations are secondly biggest obstacle. Satisfaction with teammates is also poor; it is directly linked with low qualification of coaches, as good leaders make positive team cohesion. Ice hockey is marked as expensive sport what are sometimes a problem.

Player's age stayed 16-37, average is 26. It means that players are adults and growing youth generation is missing. Currently active hockey players didn't have ice hockey rinks or women's team in aria, what explains late starting time.

Hockey players don't struggle with health, luck of proper equipment or feeling that hockey is too masculine. Player's haven't felt direct discrimination in big times because they are women and play hockey. They felt negative attitudes from close friends and family. Overall attitude and interest from society, media and surrounding people are more likely positive. Women acknowledge existents inequality between women's and mans hockey. In Estonia Ice hockey is considered as male sport and unnatural for women.

Players are highly interested to expand hockey among women. But more than half answered players don't have preferences for coach gender, top priority is qualification. They can feel firm gender roles from society but they don't adapt it them self's.

Organization of women's hockey and current club situations are rated as low and hockey is offered as a hobby. Women are really interested to see ice hockey development in personal and organizational level as expand and increase quality.

Also they are highly interested of co-operation with other Estonian hockey clubs, international involvement and united tournaments, training camps.

Current coach's skills are rated as average. Highest quality in leaders is hockey knowledge and lowest communicational competence.

4.2 Conclusion and recommendations

Women's ice hockey players experiences have close similarity with findings in previous rehearses. Their motivation in sport is to gain enjoy in physical and mental level by activities.

Also players psychological pleasure where disturbed by negative attitudes. Ice hockey is classified to "mans field" as masculine sport and not natural activities to a women. It obviously shows that genders have given their fixed behaviors and characteristics, what where shown in school material study's.

Also clear connection is obstacle in family obligations as they took too much time and disturb participation in sport. Social belief is that women are seen firstly as mothers and their main obligation is to take care of home, family and kids. Therefore the variation in Estonian sport behavior study, that women see family obligations as obstacle in bigger percents than man. Women who play ice hockey have that point in common.

Largely sporting women missing from media or their activities are shown in different angle don't seem to affect hockey women in Estonia. Overall judgment for media attitude was positive.

Limitation of the current study is that there no possibilities to compare current data. All the current inquiry questions where maid by distant assumptions. Some right ore more essential questions can be absent to gain needful information.

This study shows overall situation in Estonian women's hockey in many different ways. It carries its purpose and shows positive and negative outcomes, that can be used as a base for future study's. More investigations can be done in sport and media topics. Does women are less represented in sport, can be learned presents of women in leading sports bodies and organizations. To clarify what positions they have and who are involved with decision making.

Current study can be used to improve women's ice hockey in Estonia. It contains valuable base information with current short comes and valuations.

Interest for enlargement and motivational attributes to develop hockey into next level exists among women. Development needs overall organization in hockey starting from club level. To increase power and presents, hockey clubs should co-operate and share their experiences.

Inside team cohesion needs positive change. Hockey is team sport and by better relationships players could increase their mental and social enjoyment for the sport. To improve cohesion problem and to be able develop players skills, coaches need appropriate education. Coaches can have good hockey knowledge but they also need skills to forward those abilities.

Estonian ice hockey federation involvement where absent from women's hockey. They could be positive leaders and help to develop overall women's hockey organization. Start could be done by showing women's hockey as exiting spot or offering coaching education.

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Appendices

Attachment 1 – Estonian Women’s Ice Hockey Inquiry